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General and complete disarmament

Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum**

II. Replies received from States

India

[Original: English]
[11 August 2004]

1. India attaches importance to confidence-building measures and believes that they can play an important role in establishing an atmosphere of trust, cooperation and confidence, which in turn could be conducive to resolution of outstanding issues through peaceful means.

2. It is our belief, shared also by the international community and reflected in the consensus documents of the United Nations Disarmament Commission on the subject, that confidence-building is a step-by-step process, and at each stage of the process States must be able to measure and assess the results. It requires a consensus of the States participating in the process, who must decide freely and in the exercise of their sovereignty whether a confidence-building process is to be initiated and, if so, which measures are to be taken and how the process is to be pursued. Such measures need to be tailored to specific situations.

3. It is our view, therefore, that although the resolution purports to deal with the important subject of confidence-building measures, it asserts principles and concepts that have little to do with confidence-building measures. The resolution refers to maintenance of "military balance", which itself is not a confidence-

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** The information contained herein was received after submission of the main report.

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building measure, and seeks to impose unrealistic demands on diverse States of different sizes and security requirements. Similarly, it attempts to expand the scope of confidence-building measures beyond the parties directly involved to include all States in a "region of tension", a vague notion on which there is as yet no common view. As noted, confidence-building measures require the consensus of participating States and the exercise of free will by States with regard to the application of particular measures. However, the resolution promotes views which run contrary to the very spirit of mutual and voluntary accommodation that gives confidence-building measures their utility. By requesting the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States, the resolution also attempts to pull the Secretary-General into a role beyond what is provided for in the Charter of the United Nations or that established by practice.

4. At the same time, the resolution also fails to take into account the considerable body of established principles on confidence-building measures and the broad convergence of views on how they are best employed, especially those adopted by consensus in the Disarmament Commission. It was for those reasons that India opposed the resolution in 2003 and put its reservations on record.

5. We would like to emphasize that political commitments, together with concrete measures giving expression and effect to those commitments, are the most important instruments for confidence-building, and it is our expectation that all States will take steps to implement the commitments they have given in the bilateral, regional or international context.